



Demolition under way at Hartford Superfund site

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HARTFORD • Workers are dismantling structures at the former Chemetco copper smelter, one of the nation's most notorious toxic waste sites.

The demolition work is being carried out under supervision of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency but the site was placed on the national Superfund list of waste sites in 2010 and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will supervise disposal of toxic slag and scrubber sludge that remain on the property.

Maggie Carson, a spokeswoman for the Illinois EPA, said remediation of those wastes may take another five years. She said the U.S. EPA is trying to identify parties that may be legally responsible under federal law for some of the cleanup costs.

Workers on Tuesday were removing one of four large manifolds from the top of the foundry. The manifolds collected dust and gave the foundry its distinctive appearance. The site is just off Illinois Route 3, south of New Poag Road.

Chemetco operated from 1969 until October 31, 2001, when it shut down and filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

"This was the worst of the worst," said Chris Cahnovsky, the regional enforcement manager for the IEPA's Bureau of Land.

Cahnovsky said he believed Chemetco violated environmental laws and regulations for the entire time that it operated.

The USEPA in 1992 called Chemetco the nation's leading emitter of airborne lead. IEPA inspectors in 1996 discovered a pipe the company had secretly built 10 years earlier to carry toxic storm water runoff into a tributary of Long Lake.

In 2000, the company was fined \$3.8 million after pleading guilty of violating the federal Clean Water Act. Five workers were sentenced to probation or in-home detention for their part in the illegal discharges.

Former Chemetco owner and CEO Denis L. Feron, who was from Belgium, was a fugitive from prosecution and made the USEPA's most-wanted list of industrial polluters before federal prosecutors agreed last year to defer prosecution in return for Feron accepting responsibility for his criminal acts and paying \$500,000 in restitution that was to be used for restoration of Long Lake and surrounding wetlands. Feron was in his 80s, in poor health and unable to travel to the United States, according to court documents.